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Filed : June 25, 2003

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the examiner rejected Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, and 10 under 35 U.S.C. 102 as being anticipated by Spodig (U.S. Patent No. 3,581,873). The Examiner indicated that Claims 5-9 are allowable over the prior art. Accordingly, the applicant has amended Claim 1 to more clearly define the features of the present invention.

The cited Spodig reference discloses an endless magnet conveyor. The magnets used in the conveyor of the cited Spodig reference (magnet 15) are provided to the whole length of the conveyor such that the work to be transported is held by magnetic force from the beginning to the end of the transportation.

In contrast, the present invention discloses a work fixing device that can fix a work on a conveyor only during the time the work is being processed by the machining head. When the work is to be taken away from the conveyor, the magnetic force is weak enough to allow the work to be easily removed from the plate on the conveyor. In order to more clearly distinguish the present invention, the applicant has amended Claim 1. Specifically, the work fixing device of the present invention incorporates a machining head having a working range and the magnet attracts the work by the magnetic force within the working range of the machining head.

Moreover, in the present invention, the work is removed from the plate at a location where the magnet does not exert enough

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magnetic force to the work. Unlike the conveyor of the cited Spodig reference, the magnet in the present invention is not extended to the entire length of the transporter, but only at the location where the magnet can exert the magnet force to fix the work within in the working range of the machining head.

As described in the specification, the configuration of the work fixing device allows the work to be sufficiently fixed when the machining work is conducted and easily removed when the machining work is not conducted on the work. Although the magnetic force exerted to fix the work on the transporter causes the resistance (load) for the transporter, the resistance is minimized by the configuration of the work fixing device since such resistance exists only within the working range of the machining head. This allows the driving force of the transporter to be minimized, thereby contributing to reducing the power consumption.

The cited Spodig reference merely discloses the endless magnetic conveyor, and does not disclose or mention about the machining head. Since the machining head is not disclosed, the cited Spodig reference does not disclose the working range of the machining head either. Thus, the essential feature of the present invention is not shown or suggested by Spodig.

In this opportunity, the applicant has amended the specification to correct the minor errors therein and to more clearly disclose the present invention. This is to verify that no new matter has been introduced by this amendment.

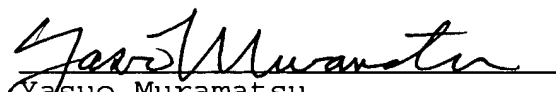
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In view of the foregoing, the applicant believes that Claims 1-10 are in condition for allowance, and accordingly, the applicant respectfully requests that the present application be allowed and passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: 4/6/05

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